



PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

DATE: September 29th, 2021

RE: **Testimony on 2021 Senate Bill 346**

TO: The Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

FROM: Senator Patrick Testin

Thank you Chairman Cowles and members of the committee for hearing my testimony on Senate Bill 346 (SB 346).

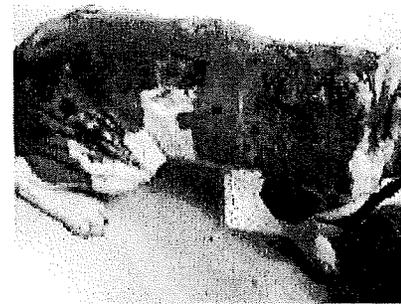
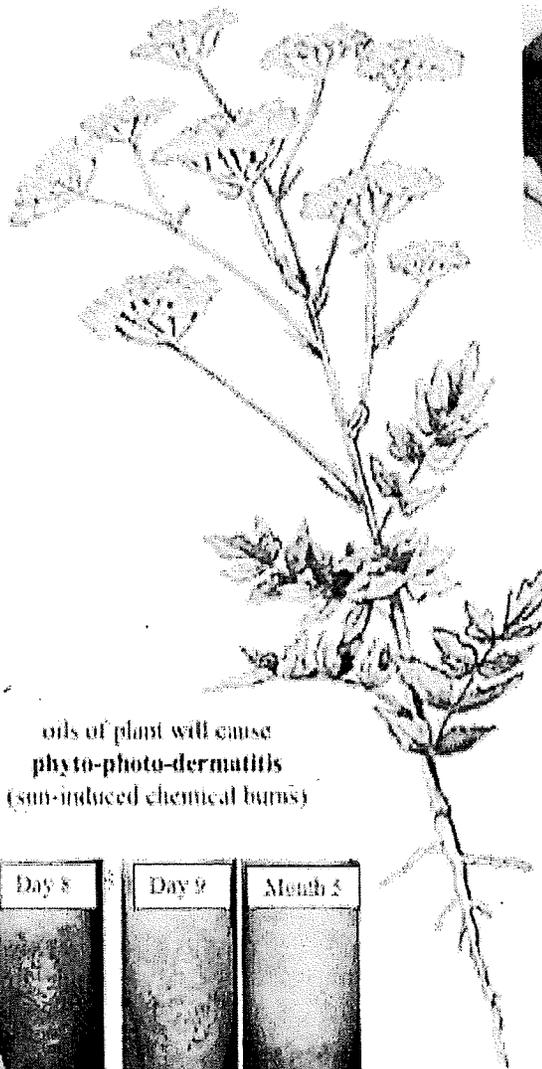
Picture a summer drive through Wisconsin's countryside. You're probably visualizing green pastures, clear streams, blue skies, and an array of colorful wildflowers. There is one sight, however, that doesn't belong - a yellow flowering plant called the wild parsnip. Passing by at fifty-five miles per hour, the wild parsnip looks harmless - but up close, this invasive species has the ability to inflict great pain.

A person or animal who comes in contact with wild parsnip on a sunny day could experience a reaction that varies from a mild rash to a severe burn. It's the reaction between the sun and the plant sap that causes the severe reaction. This plant's proliferation impacts a variety of people, including hikers, bikers, and utility workers. This bill directs the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allocate \$100,000 annually to local and tribal governments working to control the spread of this unwanted invader. SB 346 also allocates \$50,000 annually to the DNR's Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation to aid their efforts to eliminate invasive species.

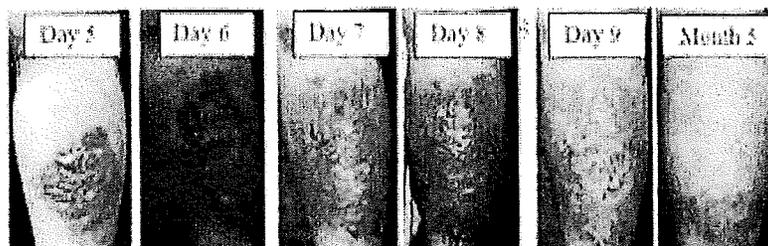
Please join me in support of this bill.

**This invasive plant
BURNS, SCARS, SPREADS, INVADES!
EDUCATE YOUR FAMILY.
Wild Parsnip is all over the place around here.
Please be aware and share this post!
Burns PETS also!**

*Warning
Shared by
Reedsburg
Fire Dept.
in July of
2018.*



oils of plant will cause
phyto-photo-dermatitis
(sun-induced chemical burns)





Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 346
Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Energy
September 29, 2021

Chairman Cowles, Vice-Chair Felzkowski, and members of the committee, I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 346. Wild parsnip is a non-native plant found across our state that usually grows in patches or as scattered plants along roadsides and in unmanaged grassland areas such as fields, pastures, or prairie restorations. Wild parsnip is currently restricted under the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources invasive species rule (NR-40). This means it is an invasive species already established in the state that causes or has the potential to cause significant environmental or economic harm or harm to human health. No person may transport, transfer, or introduce it into an un-infested area without a permit.

While wild parsnip causes a variety of impacts to the environment, it is most known for its risks to the health of humans and wildlife. Its sap can cause serious rashes, blisters, and chemical burns, as well as discoloration, known as phytophotodermatitis, when people get it on their skin and are then exposed to sunlight. Due to the risks, more education, awareness, and control efforts are needed to help mitigate its spread across Wisconsin.

In Central Wisconsin, both Portage County and Wood County have declared wild parsnip as a noxious weed and have designated John Eron, a standout farmer and leader, as their weed commissioner. When John became aware of the prevalence of wild parsnip in our area and the threat it can pose to the public health, he organized a small workgroup of local officials and stakeholders to help address the issue, which I was glad to participate in. Although the plant spreads relatively easily and its seeds remain viable in the soil for four years, several management options exist, including mowing, herbicides, grazing, fire, and biological control. When you map and schedule your routes to mow or spray based on when it goes to seed, you can control its spread.

Last legislative session, as some of you may recall, I was glad to invite John, his deputy weed commissioner Pete, and UW-Extension to the Capitol to host a briefing with DNR and DATCP on wild parsnip to teach us legislators and staff about the plant and related mitigation techniques. We also worked together to draft and introduce this legislation, Senate Bill 346, which creates a new grant program for local governments or tribes that have declared wild parsnip to be a noxious weed. These funds would be used to support efforts to map, control, and mitigate the spread of wild parsnip and other invasive species throughout the state.

John has spent considerable time and money out of his own pocket to help our counties map wild parsnip and mitigate its spread. He also has dedicated significant resources to raising awareness of the hazards of wild parsnip and best management practices. Our community is stronger because of John's leadership, but he shouldn't have to pay out of pocket for these efforts to control the spread of wild parsnip. That's why we introduced this legislation – to encourage more communities to do what John has and help prevent the spread of this invasive species that can cause serious damage to our health.

The bill aims to bolster existing efforts by state agencies, local governments, and conservation groups by requiring the DNR to award up to \$100,000 per fiscal year in grants to local units of government or tribes that have declared wild parsnip to be a noxious weed. These grants can be used to help map, control, eradicate, monitor, and minimize the spread of wild parsnip. Grant recipients can collaborate with regional conservation organizations, and local weed commissioners can apply on behalf of their local government. The bill also

appropriates \$50,000 per fiscal year to the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation to assist in their efforts to control invasive species.

This legislation will help us protect unsuspecting Wisconsinites from injury and our environment from the spread of this and other invasive species. Because of the prevalence of wild parsnip in Wisconsin, this is also a worker safety issue, from farmers to utility workers. Supporting this bill will invest in worker protection.

Senate Bill 346 enjoys bipartisan co-sponsors and has the support of a range of groups, including the Oneida Nation, Customers First! Coalition, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, and Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. I urge you to join us in supporting it and ask that you advance it through the Legislature as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome any questions you may have.



Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

2021 Senate Bill 346 Grants to Control Wild Parsnip September 29, 2021

Good morning Chair Cowles and members of the Committee. My name is Drew Feldkirchner, Director of the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. I also serve as the department's representative on the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Senate Bill 346 (SB 346) related to grants to local units of government to control wild parsnip.

Invasive species are a major challenge across Wisconsin, and wild parsnip is one example. Not only is wild parsnip ecologically damaging, it can also cause serious burns. Parsnip infestations are abundant in the southern part of the state, common in the central part, and sporadic in the north. The existing Administrative Rule NR 40 already lists wild parsnip as a restricted invasive plant statewide, meaning it can't be deliberately transported or introduced to new areas, and reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent unintentional transportation or introduction. Populations continue to spread through much of Wisconsin, where it is often spread by roadside mowing.

SB 346 would fund initial treatments for many wild parsnip populations and provide funding to administer a new statewide program. This bill would assist numerous efforts to control populations and limit further spread of this invasive species.

Many highway departments, local units of government, land managers, and landowners have worked hard to control parsnip, but success also requires control on adjacent properties. Fortunately, SB 346 would require local units of government and tribes to list wild parsnip as a noxious weed to be eligible for grants, so they would also have authority to require control on all lands in their jurisdictions.

SB 346 would allow grant recipients to collaborate with regional conservation organizations. This is important as it would allow for more efficient use of the funds, so each municipality or tribe does not have to create their own landowner contact and control program. Regional invasive species management groups could assist eligible local governments and tribes.

The one-time funding included in the bill could pose challenges to grant recipients because wild parsnip control requires at least 3-5 consecutive years of sustained effort and without this, the parsnip problem would soon return to its current, pre-intervention state. While providing the first year of funding would be helpful for many tribes and local units of government, grantees would need to seek additional funds elsewhere for subsequent years, and there is currently no dedicated funding for this work.

Another consideration regarding one-time funding is the time and resources needed to promulgate necessary rules to disperse the grant. Department staff, the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council, and many stakeholders are currently doing the preparatory work needed for the next NR 40 revision. Grant

dispersal could be added to NR 40 during the upcoming revision to streamline this need, but the final rule will not be in place before 2023.

Developing and administering a new grant program and providing outreach and notification to all counties, cities, villages, towns and tribes in the state would require significant staff time. Best management practices have already been developed to help roadside managers, landowners and others take reasonable precautions to minimize spread. However, many county and town highway departments do not have the herbicide application equipment needed to control parsnip. Contracting with regional invasive species management groups or with herbicide applicators would be necessary. It would also be critical that they use the most effective herbicides at the correct time of year. This will require training local staff or their contractors. Again, securing funding for future years is necessary to make this program effective.

Unfortunately, control of invasive plants is labor intensive. While SB 346 recognizes the importance of controlling a damaging invasive species, \$100,000 will not provide sufficient resources for meaningful control of this species by all local units of government and tribes with parsnip infestations. This amount would fund only 20 counties at \$5000 each or 50 townships at the minimal level of \$2000 each. Continuing funds would allow some parts of the state to get parsnip under control in their areas, but it would take many times this amount and the cooperation of most local units of government to achieve significant control statewide.

Finally, wild parsnip is one of many regulated invasive plants in the state. It is unique and of concern to many landowners and land managers because of the severe burns it can cause. However, it is already widespread and abundant in much of the state. About half of the regulated invasive plants are listed as "prohibited" because they are not yet widespread or abundant, and most have not yet been found in the state. Funding to control these populations early, as they are first documented, would help avoid future problems associated with the spread and establishment of invasive plant species in Wisconsin as there is not currently a funding source designated for the control of terrestrial invasive plants.

On behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, we thank you for your time and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mapping of Wild Parsnip

Mapping includes field verifying tips, driving unfamiliar roads, reporting to the online website EDDMapS, taking photos, and updating the GIS database map with the latest information.

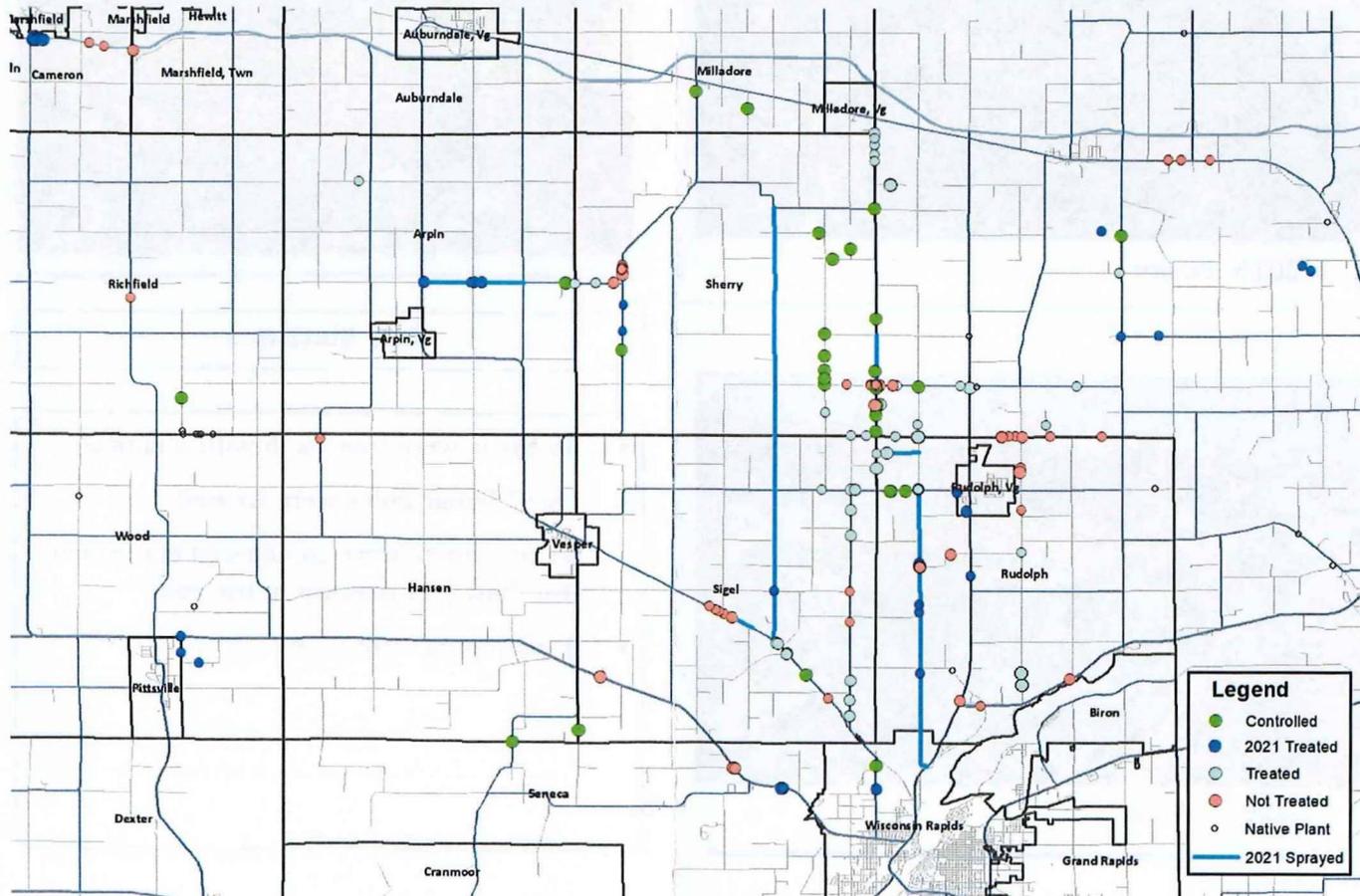
As of 2021, the following townships have wild parsnip:

Arpin, Cameron, Milladore, Richfield, Rudolph, Seneca, Sherry, Sigel, Wood, and neighboring county's township of Carson.

You can report your own sightings by going to <https://www.eddmaps.org/>

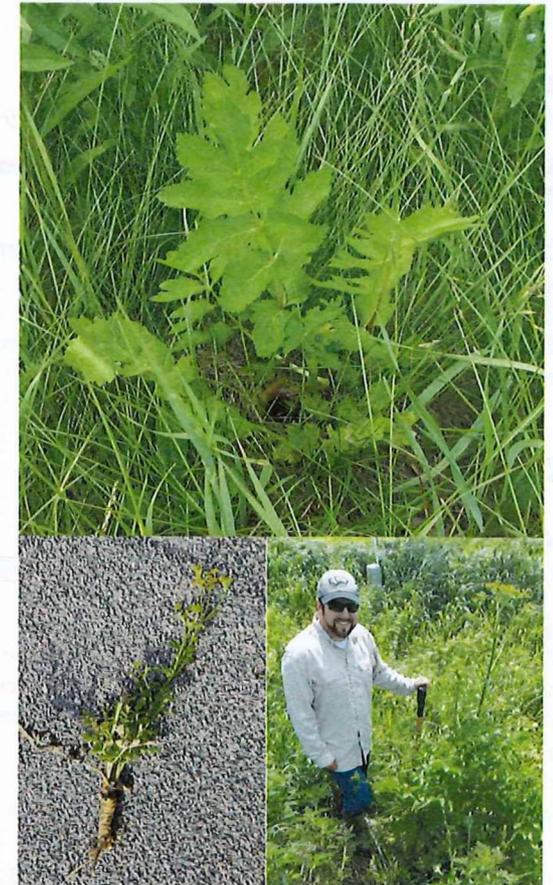
Wood County Land and Water Conservation Department

111 West Jackson Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
(715)421-8475



WOOD COUNTY LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT (LWCD)

Wild Parsnip Update 2021



To report sightings or for more information contact LWCD at 715-421-8475

Timeline

March 21 2017, Wild parsnip designated "noxious" within Wood and Portage County

July 5 2017, Weed Commissioner appointed by CEED committee

2018, Effort by Wood County Highway Department to control the plant gets underway

2019, More private lands mowing took place than ever

2020, The best effort to backpack spray yet takes place

2021, Spot spraying effort continues and increases.

Control Efforts

Shovel Control (Mechanical)

- Cut plant at base of root and dig up root

Backpack Spraying

The Wood County LWCD Conservation Specialist, Caleb Armstrong, and the Engineering Technician, Klayton Kree, backpack sprayed locations throughout the infected area. Some sites with just one or two plants were cut with shovels. In total, they treated 30 sites with many plants at each site.

- Can be treated with Roundup if done so personally

A Small Success!

Highway S seemed to be the largest area of infestation in 2018. There was a focus on this area by the Highway Department in 2018 to get rid of the plant. Below are pictures taken along Highway S. The top was taken 7/7/2018 before the control and the bottom was taken on 7/6/2021 showing the effects of timely mowing year after year.



7/7/2018. Before



7/6/2021. After

What Needs More Work

A parsnip plant was found further than before from the "hot spot" surrounding Rudolph. Plants were found for the first time on Deer Lane North in the Township of Carson.

Wild parsnip that was spotted on private lands has taken off without active control. While the road edge of Hwy S is improved, fields nearby are worse than ever.



2021 Statistics

- 35 Spots were treated (5 with a shovel)
- 18.37 linear miles were treated
- 31 new spots were considered controlled that had wild parsnip in the past
- 9 new spots were found



To: Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

September 28, 2021

Re: Senate Bill 346

Dear Members of the Committee,

As the Portage County Executive I have seen first-hand during my time in this role how important the work associated with this bill is. My own family has grappled with the effects of this noxious weed, so I know what it can do. Years ago, my wife had a terrible bout with it from some volunteer work we did on a friend's farm. She suffered terrible blisters and lesions and there are scars on her arms to this day.

I've also been very impressed with how much those affiliated with this work and this bill have accomplished through their incredible efforts in outreach and education. They are clearly state leaders in this area and their help and expertise has been welcome and sought out by others. They've also managed to achieve several goals without a lot of funding support to date. There has been some financial assistance to help with things like printing costs, but it has been very clear that if this type of work and those interested in doing it were empowered with a stable and economical funding source, they will be able to do so much more and continue to do it efficiently with tangible results.

I'm also very grateful for those who have introduced and cosponsored this bill. Locally, I know that Senator Testin and Representatives Shankland and VanderMeer have all been kept in-the-loop about this work and they have attended many meetings to hear from the people who, like them, have really helped to make this all happen. It's not a surprise for me to see that they are involved, and it's wonderful for this bill to have garnered bipartisan support. That certainly mirrors how this issue has motivated a large number of people and organizations in our area to reach beyond their own groups and perspectives to find a broad, collaborative effort that is cordial, focused, and effective.

Thank you for having this public hearing and, also, for listening to those who have come to testify to you today. I know that our own Land and Water Conservation Committee will be discussing this at their next meeting. Personally, I urge you to support the bill as it moves through the process. The funding in this bill will further empower an already economic and efficient body of work that no doubt will only grow with your support and the support of the Legislature.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Chris Holman
Portage County Executive

DATE: September 29, 2021

TO: Chairperson Cowles and
Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

FROM: Debi Towns, Sr. Director of Government Relations
WI Farm Bureau Federation

RE: Support for Senate Bill 346 – Grants to monitor and eradicate Wild Parsnip

Thank you for this opportunity to publicly support Senate Bill 346 relating to the monitoring and eradication of the Wild Parsnip. This bill proposes requiring the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), under its statewide grant program to control invasive species, to supplement the existing efforts of state agencies, local governments, and conservation groups by providing up to \$100,000 each fiscal year to monitor and minimize the spread of this noxious, damaging weed.

Like many invasive species, the wild parsnip is believed to have been brought to North America by European settlers who continued to grow the plant for its edible root. While the parsnip roots are edible, the sap of the plant can be extremely dangerous for human contact. Also known as poison parsnip, the plant forms in very dense stands and produces sap containing chemicals that ultimately can cause human skin to react to sunlight. This reaction is typically characterized by intense burns, rashes, or weeping blisters.

The DNR has already classified this weed as restricted under their invasive species rule (NR 40), recognizing that it causes or has the potential to cause significant environmental or economic damage or harm to human health. No person is allowed to transport, transfer, or introduce it into an un-infested area without permission.

Wild parsnip is commonly found in ditches along roadways, open yards, dumps, meadows and untilled grasslands. Left unchecked, the plant spreads quickly squeezing out preferable growth of native grasses and pollinators. The plant spreads by re-seeding itself. A single plant can produce 1,000 seeds annually. One of the most effective management techniques is to mow regularly, never allowing the seeds to mature. This of course, involves additional manpower and equipment costs in local government budgets that are already strained.

We appreciate Senator Testin and Representative Shankland who have put this bill forward again to provide assistance in preserving Wisconsin's environment. We encourage you to support Senate Bill 346. Thank you again for accepting this testimony.



**Wisconsin
Electric
Cooperative
Association**

222 West Washington Avenue, Suite 680
Madison, WI 53703-2719

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(608) 467-4651 fax

www.weca.coop

**Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy
September 29, 2021
Testimony on Senate Bill 346**

Good morning Chair Cowles and members of the committee:

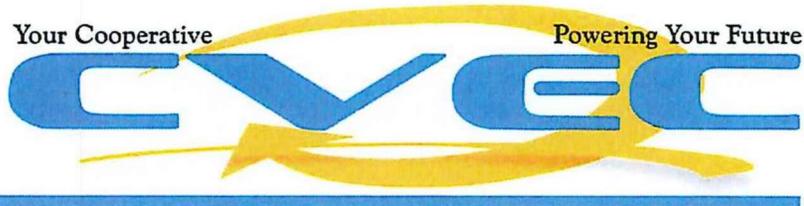
My name is Rob Richard and I'm the Director of Government Relations for the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA). I am before you today to speak in favor of Senate Bill 346, relating to grants to map, control, eradicate, monitor, and minimize the spread of wild parsnip; funding for the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation; granting rule-making authority; and making an appropriation.

Included with my testimony today is a white paper we put together for our members to share with their representatives/senators when we had our last Education and Lobby Day event back in January of 2020. I've included this to give you some perspective that this issue has been on our minds for almost two years now.

It's no secret that on any given rural road in many parts of the state, you will find wild parsnip along most fence lines. You will often find it under electric power lines, including lines within the service territory of our 24 distribution cooperatives.

While we are thankful that there aren't a great number of our lines people and field operations staff that have not been exposed to wild parsnip, it remains a safety concern for these individuals. Within our organization we are certainly talking about it more and making people more aware. I think these educational efforts have helped.

With this mind, WECA supports Senate Bill 346 with the hope that more resources can be devoted to mapping and ultimately eliminating this invasive and harmful plant species. Thank you, Chair Cowles and committee members.



Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative • 317 South 8th Street • P.O. Box 575 • Cornell, WI 54732
Phone: 715.239.6800 • Email: cvec@cve.coop • Fax: 715.239.4290 • www.cvecoop.com

September 27, 2021

To: Whom It May Concern-for Public Hearing Wednesday September 29, 2021

RE: Senator Patrick Testin's Senate Bill 346 (wild parsnip)

The Board of Directors and Staff (attached) of Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative are in full support of Senator Patrick Testin's Senate bill 346 dealing with control and eradication of wild parsnip in the State of Wisconsin.

Having two employees who have suffered through the burns of direct contact with wild parsnip and other employees who know of friends/linemen who have had it as well, we feel it warrants a state level effort to arrest its growth and hopefully minimize the plants footprint in the state.

As can be well imagined, line-workers have a significantly increased chance of contact over most, especially when assisting other cooperatives in emergency situations throughout the state. This why any steps no matter how modest are greatly appreciated.

Again, we at Chippewa Valley Electric thank you for your consideration and effort in mitigating the spread of wild parsnip.

Sincerely,

Dean Ortmann, President/CEO
Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

CHIPPEWA VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
317 South 8th Street, P.O. Box 575
Cornell, Wisconsin 54732
07/19/2021

<u>EMPLOYEE</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Nicholas J. Alberson	N4547 Poplar Rd., Tony, WI
June A. Bach	20875 265 th St., Cornell, WI
Janet L. Brandli	PO Box 163, Cornell, WI
Terry Capek	809 Fox Rd., Cornell, WI
Russell R. Falkenberg, Jr.	356 S Ash St, Cadott, WI
Dan L. Ferris	20250 326 th St., Boyd, WI
Brandyn Hanson	401 Flambeau Ave, Ladysmith, WI
Franklin Hakes	903 Pine Needle Dr, Chip. Falls, WI
Trevin Jensen	205 N 11 th St, Cornell, WI
Tyler Jones	28604 264 th St, Holcombe, WI
Della L. Kent	25142 290 th St., Holcombe, WI
Chris Larson	12052 250 th St, Cadott, WI
Millissa C. Larson	26501 205 th Ave., Cornell, WI
Ben Modl	W8350 County Rd D, Conrath, WI
Quentin Muska	9666 Cty Hwy D, Boyd, WI
Greg Olmstead	29803 County Hwy W, Holcombe, WI
Dean D. Ortmann	26918 275 th St, Holcombe WI
Robbie L. Poradish	817 Woodside Drive, Cornell
Ed Rosseter	415 S 8 th St, Cornell, WI
Kevin L. Scheidler	25763 205 th Ave, Cornell, WI
Nicole Whipp Sime	323 W. Chippewa St., Cadott, WI
Zach Sonnentag	26840 170 th Ave, Cadott, WI
Robert Wruck	26355 274 th St., Holcombe, WI
Keith L. Zimmerman	19033 125 th Ave., Jim Falls, WI

<u>DIRECTORS</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Steve Wall (6)	16525 120 th St, Bloomer, WI
Deone Goettl (5)	24505 Cty Hwy TT, Cornell
John L. Petska (7)	16163 190 th Ave., Bloomer, WI
Clyde Shipman (3)	10215 Cty Hwy M, New Auburn, WI
Kevin Meistad (4)	24118 State Hwy 178, Cornell, WI
Steven L. Johnson (2)	N388 Eau Claire St., New Auburn, WI
Dan Liske (1)	15707 360 th St, Stanley, WI



**Wisconsin
Electric
Cooperative
Association**

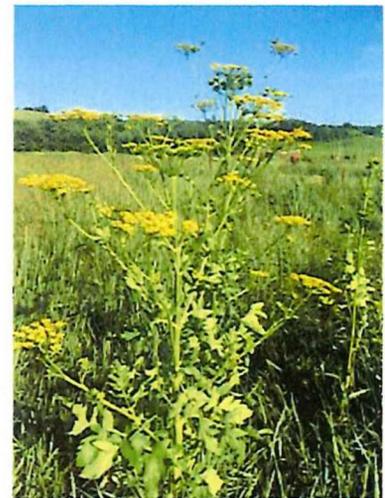
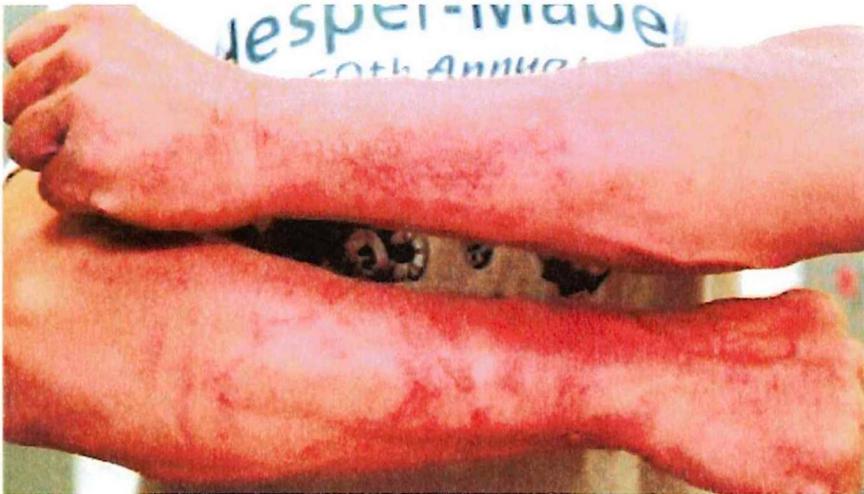
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Wild Parsnip Proposal

Background: Wild parsnip is a dangerous non-native plant found throughout Wisconsin, typically growing in patches or as scattered plants along roadsides and in unmanaged grassland areas such as fields, pastures, or prairie restorations. It's been present in Wisconsin for over a hundred years but it's proliferation in recent decades throughout the countryside is becoming a significant problem.

Proposal: A bill is being introduced by Rep. Katrina Shankland, Rep. Nancy VanderMeer, Rep. Ron Tusler, Rep. Lisa Subeck, Sen. Patrick Testin, and Sen. Tim Carpenter to supplement existing efforts by state agencies, local governments, and conservation groups by requiring the DNR to award up to \$100,000 per fiscal year in grants to local units of government or American Indian tribes which have declared wild parsnip to be a noxious weeds to map, control, eradicate, monitor, and minimize the spread of wild parsnip.

The bill also appropriates \$50,000 per fiscal year to the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation to assist in their efforts to control invasive species. Grant recipients can collaborate with regional conservation organizations, and local weed commissioners can apply on behalf of their local government.



Key Facts:

- This plant is regulated in Wisconsin by DNR invasive species rule (NR-40) as a restricted species. Due to this designation it is required that plants and reproductive propagules cannot knowingly be spread into un-infested areas. Although the plant spreads relatively easily, several management options exist, including mowing, herbicides, grazing, fire, and biological control.
- This plant is becoming a serious threat to electric linemen in their field of operation. While wild parsnip causes a variety of impacts to the environment, it is most commonly known for the rashes and burns it can cause on human skin when people come into contact with the plant's chemicals and are exposed to sunlight or other UV light.

Wisconsin's Electric Cooperatives ask that you please support this legislative effort to bring greater awareness and funding resources to the fight against wild parsnip.